

Our Boys and Girls

EVER-BLOOMING ROSE.

By Helen Elizabeth Coolidge.

"I wish, oh dear! how hard I wish,
I had a garden fair;
I'd never let the weeds grow tall.
I'd water it with care;
I'd pick the lovely roses bright
And give them all away;
I'd be a butterfly and dance
Amid the blossoms gay;—
Yet, here I live, in this old street,
And scarcely see the sky,
And 'tis so hard to do what's right,
That, often, I don't try."

"O little maid!" a fairy speaks,
"Your heart's a garden fair,
And grumbly thoughts are ugly weeds
That fast, are growing there;
There is a rose, well-named "Content"
That's always bright with dew,
And grows and grows more beautiful
If watered well by you;—
With only just a patch of sky,
In some dark, narrow street,
I've seen it blooming all the year,
The sweetest of the sweet."

"I'LL PAY YOU FOR THAT!"

This little parable by an unknown author teaches its own lesson:

A hen trod on a duck's foot. She did not mean to do it, and it did not hurt the duck much; but the duck said: "I'll pay you for that!" So the duck flew at the old hen, but as she did so her wings struck an old goose who stood close by.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried the goose, and she flew at the duck; but as she did so, her foot tore the fur of a cat who was just then in the yard.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried the cat, and she started for the goose; but as she did so, her claw caught in the wool of a sheep.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried the sheep, and she ran at the cat; but as she did so, her foot hit the foot of a dog who lay in the sun.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried she, and she jumped at the sheep; but as he did so, her leg struck an old cow that stood by the gate.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried she, and she ran at the dog; but as she did so, her horn grazed the skin of a horse who was standing by a tree.

"I'll pay you for that!" cried he, and he rushed at the cow.

What a noise there was! The horse flew at the cow, and the cow at the dog, and the dog at the sheep, and the sheep at the cat, and the cat at the goose, and the goose at the duck, and the duck at the hen. What a fuss there was! And all because the hen accidentally stepped on the duck's toes.

"Hi! hi! What's all this?" cried the man who had the care of them. "You may stay here," he said to the hen; but he drove the duck to the pond, the goose to the field, the cat to the barn, the sheep to her fold, the dog to the house, the cow to the yard, and the horse to his stall. And so all their good times were over because the duck would not overlook a little hurt which was not intended.

A little explained,

A little endured,

A little forgiven,

The quarrel is cured.

—Exchange.

In the eyes of the world, the test of a man's religion is worthy walking, right living, seven days of every week the year round.—Ex.

ODD CUSTOMS IN JAPAN.

The daily life of a Japanese mother is very much like that of a Canadian mother; rising, preparing breakfast, getting the children and husband off to school and business, tidying up, and preparing the other meals, welcoming them back in the evening, and putting the children to bed. The matter of performing these various tasks may be different, but the tasks are the same. The tables must be set, though they use trays instead of tables. The breakfast must be cooked, though it is rice instead of porridge. The beds must be made, though making a bed means folding up a mattress and covers and putting them into a closet. Cleaning and dusting must be done, and clothes wear out and get dirty in Japan as at home. To wash them they must be taken apart, and after washing are stretched on a board to be dried and ironed at the same time. Then, of course, they must be remade. It is not such a hard task as it might seem, though the needles are very poor, for the stitches are as long as our basting stitches; so the work is quickly done.

The Japanese are a polite people. Their language is full of polite terms and has no swear words. But why use an oath when the omission of an honorific will show your contempt sufficiently? The bow is a sign of politeness, but not of servility. Sitting on the floor as they do, permits of no other form of salutation. Hand-shaking and kissing are impossible. It is hard for foreigners to learn the art of bowing, and few of us ever become proficient.

There are no old maids in Japan. The parents, with the help of the go-between, choose the husband or wife for their children, and that is all there is to it. The bride, after the preparation of her trousseau, goes to the home of her groom and there is married, the real ceremony being the three-times-three sips of wine. The marriage is registered by changing the wife's place of residence from her father's house to her husband's, and in case of divorce her residence is merely changed back again.

Japan is a paradise of babies, but in this paradise they cry. They are welcome in every home, and often rule the whole family. There are many superstitions connected with children. A papier-mache doll is placed at the head of the child's bed to ward off evil. Three pints of rice are put on a child's back to prevent it from walking before it is a year old, for that portends an early death or residence in a foreign country. The cure for prickly heat is to hang an egg-plant by a red thread over the door before any member of the family has eaten any that season. For shyness, wipe the child's face with the floor-cloth, and for measles put the hot rice-pot over the child's head. The school ages are from four to six in the kindergarten; six to twelve in the primary school; twelve to seventeen in high school, and then university. The majority of the girls finish only the primary school, but boys go on through the high school, and many now receive a university education.

People grow old early in Japan. Sixty is the age limit, and should one reach three-score years and ten he is termed "a rarity since antiquity." He is then in his second childhood, and often wears red clothes, which is the children's color. Men retire from business as early as forty-five or fifty, and are then

taken care of by their children. Respect for old age is a virtue of this people.

When death does come, the screen in the room is turned upside down, the bed-clothes are spread over the body upside down, the sandals are put on backwards to show that the dead shall not return, and a cloth is spread over the face that the soul may not be retarded on its road to Hades. The funeral procession is headed by a guide, followed by men with lanterns on poles, huge bunches of flowers, birds in big cages to be set free at the grave. The priests are followed by men bearing the body, after which come the mourners and friends. A visit is paid to the grave every day for seven days, and every week for seven weeks, for the spirit is supposed to be wandering in space for forty-nine days, and the prayers at the grave help it on its journey. On the forty-ninth day forty-nine cakes are sent to the temple because of the old idea that there are forty-nine bones in the body.

This resume teaches only a very few of the many interesting customs of this very interesting people.—Christian Messenger.

TWO WAYS TO BE HELPED.

"When a boy," said a prominent member of a church, "I was much helped by Bishop Hamline, who visited a house where I was. Taking me aside, the bishop said: 'When in trouble, my boy, kneel down and ask God's help; but never climb over the fence into the Devil's ground and then kneel down and ask help. Pray from God's side of the fence.' Of that," said he, "I have thought every day of my life since." Continuing, he remarked: "Sanford Cobb, the missionary to Persia, helped me in another way. Said he, 'Do you ever feel thankful when God blesses you?' 'Always.' 'Did you ever tell Him so?' 'Well, I don't know that I have.' 'Well, try it, my young friend; try it, try it. Tell Him so; tell Him aloud; tell Him so that you will hear it yourself.' That was a new revelation. I found that I had only been glad, not grateful. I have been telling Him with grateful feelings ever since to my soul's help and comfort."—Young Men's Era.

WHAT A BOY COSTS.

So you are twenty-one.

And you stand up clear-eyed, clear-minded, to look all the world squarely in the face. You are a man!

Did you ever think, son, how much it costs to make a man out of you?

Some one has figured up the cost in money of rearing a child. He says to bring up a young man to legal age, care for him and educate him, costs \$25,000, which is a lot of money to put into flesh and blood.

But that isn't all.

You have cost your father many hard knocks and short dinners and gray streaks in his hair; and your mother—oh, boy, you will never know! You have cost her days and nights of anxiety and wrinkles in her dear face, and heartaches and sacrifice.

It has been expensive to grow you; but—

If you are what we think you are, you are worth all your cost—and much, much more.

Be sure of this: While father does not say much but "Hello, son," way down deep in his tough, staunch heart he thinks you are the finest ever; and as for the little mother, she simply cannot keep her love and pride for you out of her eyes. You are a man now.

And some time you must step into your father's shoes. He wouldn't like you to call him old, but just the same he isn't as young as he used to be. You see, young man, he has been working pretty hard for more than twenty